A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT MARYVILLE, TEN.

September 25, 1822,

AT THE

INAUGURATION

OF THE

REV. ISAAC ANDERSON, A. M.

AS

PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY

IN THE

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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KNOXVILLE REGISTER OFFICE

PRINTED BY

HEISKELL & BROWN.

1823.

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE.

Acts, IX, 20.

"And straightway he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

THE events of this day claim our gratitude. The Southern and Western Theological Seminary is expected, in a short period, to commence its internal operations. The professor is now to be set apart to the responsible office and sacred trust assigned him. As this is an institution to be devoted to the work of preparing men for the Gospel Ministry, it is presumed, that the text furnishes a theme appropriate to the occasion.

The peculiar work of gospel ministers is to preach Christ. This appears from the general commission which the Redeemer gave his Apostles, a little before his ascension to glory. He said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel is a system of "Glad tidings," revealed through Christ. In preaching the gospel, therefore, Christ must, in some relation or other, be constantly kept in view.

The example of the Apostles furnishes an illustration of their mission and work. Mark informs us, that "they went forth and preached every where" Paul began his ministry by "preaching Christ in the Synagogues." These holy men planted churches, and watered them with the word, and perseveringly devoted themselves to the preaching of the gospel.

The declarations of the Apostles give evidence of the same interesting fact. "The twelve" directed that the temporal affairs of the church should be committed to others; "we," said they, "will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the *ministry of the word.*" Paul declared to the Corinthian church, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The various doctrines, then, which he preached were comprehended in his preaching Christ. To the Galatians he communicated the same thing; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ." He stated that the substance of the solemn and responsible "ministry, which he had received of the Lord Jesus," was to "testify the *gospel* of the grace of God." This he could not have done, but by a clear and constant exhibition of the character and works of the Redeemer. He solemnly affirmed to the elders of the church of Ephesus, that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable" unto them, and that the essential points in his preaching were "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Then Christ must, in the preaching of the apostle, have been presented to his hearers, as the great object of consideration and affection.

The design of preaching the gospel is to effect the redemption of sinners. To accomplish this design, it is requisite that Christ should be preached as "the way and the truth and the life. For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." In the efforts of ministers to enlighten and save sinners, they have no authority to draw motives from any other sources than the law and the gospel. The law must be presented in its broad and immutable claims, that it may be effectual as "a school master, to bring us to Christ." The preacher must display its awakening artillery, and announce to the sinner its tremendous sentence, and then point him to the blood of Christ as the only source of forgiveness, and urge him to flee to it without hesitation or delay. Every arrow discharged from the heavenly quiver, to penetrate the sinner's heart, must be dipped in Immanuel's blood. Every motive, exhibited to rescue souls from utter destruction, must derive its pungency and its power from its relation to Christ.

The scriptures inculcate, on gospel ministers, an entire devotedness to preaching Christ; which shows that this is their peculiar work. Paul instructed Timothy to this effect. He said, "Meditate on these things; give thyself *wholly to them.*" The things intended are those which pertain to Christ and the interest of his kingdom. In giving himself wholly to his work, the preacher must give his thoughts, his studies, his time and his heart wholly to preaching Christ. This, then, is his business; for the injunction to devote himself wholly to it, necessarily excludes his attention from every other employment.

Let us now consider what is comprehended in preaching Christ.

It comprehends, in general, a display of the character and works of Christ.

1. The Redeemer possesses essential divinity. He is, in personal dignity, perfections and glory, equal to the Father. The scripture declares, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily." That is, the divine nature or essence is in Christ. Then he must be God, because he possesses the peculiar nature of Jehovah. The Father attests the divinity of the Son, by giving him an appellation infinitely above that of angels. He says to the Son, "thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." He establishes the divinity of the Son in heaven, by his solemn proclamation to all the shining hosts, "Let all the angels of God worship him." If Christ were not the true God, it would be idolatry committed in heaven for the angels to worship him. The peculiar titles which distinguish the divinity of the Father are, by the sacred writers, attributed to Christ, without hesitation or reserve. He is called "the Lord from heaven, Jehovah, God, the Mighty God." Perfections are ascribed to him which are peculiar to Deity. Almightiness belongs to Christ. He "upholds all things by the word of his power." Infinite knowledge is ascribed to him. "Now, "said the disciples, "are we sure that thou knowest all things. "And Peter said unto Jesus, "Lord, thou knowest all things." None but God can comprehend the knowledge of all things from eternity to eternity.

The same works are ascribed to Christ, which are exclusively performed by the one true God. It is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Yet the same authority says, concerning Christ, "all things were made by him." Therefore, Christ is the true God. Christ is said to be "over all, God blessed forever."

The divinity of the Saviour is a cardinal point. If we renounce it, we equally renounce the life of our souls, and the life of the universe. It is the foundation of the gospel scheme. Without it there is no salvation.

The Redeemer, also, possesses proper humanity. This consists of a reasonable, human soul, and a body like our own. "Verily," says the apostle, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." He is called Son of man, in numerous instances in the New Testament, with evident intention to express his human nature. Christ, therefore, unites in his person two natures, the one human, the other divine; which are infinitely different and intimately united. The divine nature of the Redeemer existed from eternity. The scripture says of

Christ, his "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." His human nature was conceived by the miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. In this nature he was Mary's Son. These two natures, united in Christ, make but one person. Hence he is called Immanuel; which, being interpreted, is God with us." He is "God manifest in the flesh." It is impossible, therefore, to preach Christ, without clearly establishing his divinity and his humanity, and both these natures inseparably united in one person. How can a man preach Christ, who preaches a creature instead of a God?

2. Christ must be preached in the grounds and import of his Sonship. Paul viewed this so essential, that could he convince the Jews concerning it, he would accomplish his principal design in his controversy with them. Hence he began his ministry with this doctrine, and not only preached Christ, but preached him as being the Son of God Nothing more was necessary to bring the Jews to acknowledge Christ as a divine person and the true Messiah, than to convince them that he was the Son of God. This appears from their own words and conduct. Christ called God his Father, and said, "I and my Father are one." At this the Jews "took up stones to stone him." Christ enquired into the cause of their conduct. They replied, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; because that thou being a man, makest thyself God." The Saviour knew that they understood him to assert his divinity by calling himself the Son of God. This appears in his answer; "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God"? Another passage illustrates the same thing; "Jesus answered them, my Father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said, also, that God was his Father; *making himself equal with God.*" The Jews understood Christ to claim equality with the Father when he proclaimed himself the Son of God. Christ understood his own language in the same sense, and by it asserted his perfect oneness of being with the Father. Paul had the same view of the subject, and, therefore, attempted to establish the Sonship of Christ in the first efforts of his soul to bring his countrymen to embrace christianity.

Christ is not the Son of God, considered simply as a divine person; but his Sonship arises from the scheme of redemption. Altho' the distinction of persons in the God-head is

founded in the divine nature, and is essential to the divine existence, yet the names, Father, Son and Spirit took their rise from the parts which the sacred persons signified by them covenanted to perform in the work of man's salvation. Some of the grounds, on which the Sonship of the Redeemer is asserted, clearly establish his divinity.

He was chosen and set apart from eternity to be the Saviour of sinners. This is one reason of applying to him the appellation of SON. The Father is represented as saying, in reference to Christ, "Mine *elect*, in whom my soul delighteth. Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, *elect*, precious. My servant whom I have *chosen*." The scriptures give the title SON, to any person who is elected or chosen by the Almighty for some holy or religious purpose. This may be seen in the case of Israel. "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son. Let my son go." The reason why Israel was called the son of God, is assigned. "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all nations that are upon the earth." Christ's being chosen to the work of man's redemption, is a good reason why he is called the Son of God. When was he chosen? The scripture says, "His goings forth have been from everlasting." It speaks of God's "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now as Christ is from everlasting, and God had formed *an eternal* purpose in him, then Christ must have been chosen from eternity, and is, of consequence, the eternal Son of God.

Two other grounds of the Redeemer's sonship may be mentioned. The miraculous conception of his human nature, by the agency of the divine spirit, is one of them. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God."

Christ's miraculous resurrection from the dead is another reason why he is called the son of God. The apostle says, "In that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second psalm, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." This declaration in the second psalm never was fulfilled till the moment of Christ's resurrection. The day of the Saviour's resurrection was that on which he was begotten of the Father and called Son of God. This accords with another passage, where it is said, speaking of Christ, that he was "declared to be the son of God with power, *by his resurrection from the dead*." Some of the reasons

why Christ is called son of God are peculiar to himself; and, on this account, he is called the "only begotten of the Father."

3. Christ must be preached in the nature and extent of his meritorious righteousness. It is a fundamental truth, that the righteousness of Christ is the sole ground of the redemption of sinners. The scriptures declare, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The reason is given, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." How, then, can men be just with God? The apostle says, they are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The complete righteousness of Christ, furnished for the redemption of sinners, consists in his obedience and sufferings unto death. The atonement consists in Christ's suffering, which was offered in place of the punishment of transgressors. Christ's obedience constitutes his merit, or title to reward. The atonement is a general provision, securing the ends of law and moral government, so as to furnish a ground on which it is consistent to make a proclamation of mercy to all the race, in whose nature the atonement was made. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This cannot mean the elect world, as the passage implies that some of the world may finally perish. It must, therefore, mean the world of mankind, to whom the provision of the gospel extends, while, nevertheless, numbers perish through their unbelief. Christ "tasted death for every man." The application of the atonement is special, being directed by the decree of election.

4. In preaching Christ, the nature, extent and perpetuity of his sacred offices must be displayed.

As Redeemer, he sustains and executes the offices of Prophet, Priest and King. "Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you." This passage is a prediction of Christ and his prophetic office. It belongs to him as Prophet, to reveal the knowledge of God, of his plans and ultimate designs. Christ himself told his

disciples, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared him.*" God is invisible. All the correct information which man possesses concerning him is revealed, through Christ, or declared by him, as that distinguished "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He said to his disciples, "All things, that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." The saving illumination, which he gives by his word and spirit, is limited to the elect.

Christ's office and work, as Prophet, will continue during the immortality of his saints. The heavenly "city has no need of the sun, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The radiance of the divine glory will beam through him forever, and inspire the myriads of holy creatures about his throne, with sublimest songs, and "raptures all divine," and give them an elevation, in dignity and honor, which shall never terminate.

The Saviour, as Priest, makes atonement and intercession. The work of making atonement being finished, the Redeemer now advocates the cause of his people, and intercedes in their behalf on the ground of his meritorious righteousness. All men in this life receive benefits flowing from the atonement of Christ, but his intercession, relative to saving blessings, is made for none but the elect, who were given to him in the covenant of redemption. Hence, he says, "I pray not for the *world*, but for *them* whom thou hast *given* me *out* of the world." His priestly office, Christ will ever retain and execute. To him it is said, "Thou art a Priest *forever*, after the order of Melchisedec." It is said of him, "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an *unchangeable* priesthood." His priesthood then continues with his endless life. Again the perpetuity of his priestly office is affirmed. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "he is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he *ever liveth* to make *intercession for them.* For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is *consecrated forevermore.*" The righteousness of Christ is the broad and immoveable basis on which the redeemed will stand forever in heaven, justified, accepted and triumphant.

The Redeemer is King in Zion. In this office he subdues his own enemies and those of his people, regulates the affairs of his church and the affections of his saints, and guards

the rights of his throne. The scripture declares, that he "Must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." In the second psalm it is written, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." The angel said to Mary, concerning her son, "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his *kingdom* there shall be *no end*." The obvious consequence is, that his kingly power will ever be exercised. In preaching Christ he is to be displayed in the extent, the energy and eternity of his offices.

5. In preaching Christ his influence in the universe should be clearly described. From eternity, the sacred persons of the Trinity entered into covenant, in reference to the salvation of men. In this covenant the part which Christ was to perform in the work of redemption was stipulated, and exactly determined. Christ is equal to the Father in his divinity; but his office, according to the covenant of redemption, is inferior to the office of the Father. Hence, he frequently says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." This, and all similar expressions, assert inferiority of office, in respect to Christ, and not inferiority of character or existence.

The work of creation was assigned to Christ in the covenant of redemption. Accordingly, the scripture declares, "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." To the Collossians Paul says of Christ, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created *by him* and *for him*." Christ made the sun, and gave him all his cheering and reviving rays. He poised the earth upon the empty air. He spread the heavens abroad like a curtain. He touched into existence the immense system of worlds with which we are surrounded. He gave mental capacity and moral activity to all the orders of holy angels. The whole creation, in its incomprehensible vastness, and its inscrutable variety, was ordered into existence by an act of his will. Then let us view the agency of Christ as extending, by the forming influence of a God, to every thing within the range of created natures.

All legislative and executive authority, in the administration of the divine government, was delegated to Christ, in the counsels of Jehovah. The created universe was put into his hands, to be managed by him so as to advance the interest of redemption, in the wisest manner. This is the

view which Christ, who perfectly understood the nature of the covenant of redemption, has given us. He says, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." This must have been by covenant agreement; for in no other sense had the Father a superior claim to any thing. Again he says, "All power is *given unto me* in heaven and in earth." This power was not mere omnipotence, which Christ possessed in an equal degree with the Father, but *authority*, which it was agreed in covenant Christ should exercise, until the final judgment, over heaven and earth and all worlds, in order to make the brightest display of God's glory in the work of man's redemption. It is expressly said of Christ, "The government shall be upon his shoulders," and "by him *all things consist*." He therefore, extends an influence over the universe, as Supreme Governor and as the God of Providence, in the office of Redeemer. Angels are devoted to the interest of redemption; which shows that Christ disposes of them as he pleases. "Are they not *all* ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" Devils believe that they are subject to his control. Their language to Christ was, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Men are at his disposal. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Salvation is at his disposal. In his prayer to his Father, Christ says, respecting himself, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that *he* should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Thus, in preaching Christ, his influence must be represented as extending to every object, as felt by every being, and decisive in every event.

6 In preaching Christ the good of the universe, consisting in the display of the divine glory and the moral purity and felicity of intelligent creatures, should be shown to be suspended upon him as mediator. He is the medium through which all God's plans are brought to view, and his whole character displayed. The apostle insisted upon this, when he said, speaking of God, "Who created all things *by Jesus Christ*, to the *intent* that now, unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the church*, the *manifold wisdom* of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed *in Christ Jesus our Lord?* Thus the grand and comprehensive scheme, which God adopted from eternity, was to display all his perfections through Christ our Lord. Christ shows, to "Principalities and powers in heavenly places," the wonders and

glories of the divine nature. By him myriads of ruined creatures are rescued from the power of the second death, and conducted along the shining way which leads to the throne of God. He is the channel through which that eternal good flows to creatures by which the blessedness of Godhead is perpetuated. It is, in fine, through him, that the government of God is ordained to obtain all its brilliant and eternal triumphs.

7. In preaching Christ he must be exhibited as the trial of the hearts of all intelligent creatures. There is a vigorous conflict in respect to Christ; a conflict as extensive as the universe of intelligent beings, and as deathless as the powers of sin and holiness. All holy beings, from the eternal Monarch who walks upon the starry plain, down to the smallest speck of virtuous intelligence, are solemnly engaged to advance the victories of the cross of Christ, to lift his glories high, and extend his fame along the rolling years of time and ceaseless ages of eternity. All sinful beings attack the character and cross of Christ. Thither they summon their deadly hate, and fain would check the progress of salvation. The cross of Christ is the point at which the opposing energies of the universe are concentrated. At this point the groans, and blood and love of our incarnate God were witnessed. At this point the moral loveliness of angels shines with increasing lustre, by their lively interest in the scenes and work of redemption. At this point devils, by cruel opposition, contract deeper malignity and guilt; and at this point the righteous and ungodly among men have the different views and feelings of heaven and hell. At this spot all the varieties of moral sympathies are awakened and experienced. The cross of Christ gives complexion to moral character through all the vast dominions of Jehovah.—Christ is the personage in the view of whose attributes and work, the moral character and final destination of all ranks of accountable beings will be determined.

8. In preaching Christ he should be displayed in all the honors with which he is surrounded in the universe. The Father honors Christ by appointing him to the office of mediator; by proclaiming his approbation of his conduct; by exalting him as the risen Saviour above all principalities and powers; by rewarding him with the everlasting blessedness of all souls purchased and saved by his blood; by committing to him the care of his universal government and glory; and by assigning to him the office of final Judge of quick and dead.

The Holy Spirit confers distinguished honors upon Christ, by anointing him on earth at his consecration to his priestly office; by his powerful and miraculous attestations to the truth of Christ's mission and doctrines; by the inspiration of the scriptures, which chiefly relate to the character and work of the Redeemer; by awakening dead souls to spiritual life, by uniting them to him as their Lord, and keeping them by his mighty "power through faith unto salvation."

Christ will be crowned with signal honor in the scene of judgement. "Dominions, thrones, principalities and powers" will bend around him, and, with adoring hearts, attend him to the seat of judgement. These orders of holy beings, having honored the Redeemer, by their incessant worship and swift obedience to execute his pleasure, will then attend him on the most august and solemnizing occasion which the universe can witness. There the Redeemer will be exalted high upon his awful throne. Every one shall see him with the livliest expressions of joy or sorrow. The splendors of divinity will circle him around. His friends will voluntarily honor him in every possible respect. But wo! to his enemies, they shall feel the terrors of his power. The universe will be impressed with the irresistible evidence of his right to dispose of heaven and hell. All events will hang upon his decisive will, and every creature own his will to be both just and good. Then must his enemies be compelled to acknowledge his divinity. At his frown nature will shrink away, and all the guilty throng, with cries and shrieks, will call on rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the Judge's face and the over-flowing deluge of his wrath. Christ will extract, before assembled worlds, ample confessions from reluctant millions. He will get himself honor upon his enemies. Hence it is written, "God hath given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Thus the universe will bestow upon Christ the most diversified and glorious honors that a God can wear.

9. Christ should be preached as the everlasting bond of union among all holy creatures. After the resurrection Christ will "deliver up" to the Father "the kingdom," or his delegated authority over the general empire of God, but will be Prophet, Priest, and King forever. The apostle says, respecting Christ, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the

blood of the cross, *by him* to *reconcile all things* unto *himself*; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Paul instructs the Ephesians, in language of the same import. "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in *one* all things *in Christ*, both which are *in heaven* and which are on *earth*, even *in him*." Through Christ, the multitude which no man can number, purified by grace, and redeemed from the earth, shall mingle with holy angels, and angels with them in the most exalted society. Christ will bind all these holy creatures together, so that they will be united in him and compose his heavenly family. He will preside over them with benignity and love, and they will gaze upon his glories with ineffable delight.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If preaching Christ comprehends a display of his character and works, then we can easily account for the success which attended the primitive ministers of the gospel. They preached Christ. There is something peculiarly forcible and pungent in the gospel of Christ, which awakens the consciences and interests the feelings of men. Preaching Christ in his true character and works discloses the heart and guilt of man, and frequently extorts the anxious inquiry, "what shall I do to be saved"? Peter preached Christ on the day of Pentecost, and about three thousand souls humbly surrendered to the authority and mercy of the Redeemer. Paul preached Christ, and Pagans renounced their idolatry, and stubborn Jews gave their hearts to Jesus. Evangelical preachers have always been successful preachers. Whitefield and many others preached Christ, and thousands were converted to God. It is true, a divine energy attended the word preached by these and other orthodox ministers; but this shows that they preached the true gospel, which is generally witnessed by the saving power of divine grace. Mere moral harangues, which studiously exclude the heart-affecting and humbling doctrines of the cross, can never awaken a sense of guilt in the human bosom, and reform the vicious lives of men. And those, who deny the divinity and atoning sacrifice of Immanuel, can never by their preaching arrest the progress of iniquity in sinners, and bring them by repentance, submission and a holy life, to the heavenly kingdom. Their scheme of doctrines explodes the ground of pardon and drives eternal life, with cruel haste, from all the race of dying man.

2. If preaching Christ comprehends a display of his character and works, then we infer the necessity of increasing the number of faithful ministers of the gospel. The design of preaching Christ is to display the divine glory in the salvation of perishing souls. The gospel unfolds the grand objects of useful knowledge, and the only method of redemption. In preaching Christ all the plans and works of God, the designs and ends of his moral government, the grounds of obligation, the motives that lead to duty, and the relations of men to eternity are to be declared. Millions have never heard this gospel, and millions, that have heard it, need to hear it frequently through the remaining period of their lives. How important that this gospel should be repeatedly preached to all men. This, however, cannot be done, without increasing the number of gospel ministers. "How shall they hear without a preacher? The gospel ministry is designed to carry light and life in its train, to bind the hearts of men together, to harmonize their views and interests, to diffuse substantial happiness among the members of human society, and through all the relations of life, and prepare the lost and guilty for a heaven of unsullied holiness and permanent felicity. It is, therefore, of supreme importance, to the best interests of mankind, that the number of gospel ministers should be greatly increased in every section of our country and of our *world*.

3. If preaching Christ comprehends a display of his character and works, then we infer that the most eminent qualifications are desirable in the ministers of the gospel. A good heart is an essential qualification in a gospel minister. "The same commit thou to faithful men." A minister should be a man of talents, "who shall be *able* to teach others." He should possess as various and extensive learning as possible. Paul directed Timothy to improve his mind by study and the acquisition of knowledge, altho' he lived in the time of the inspiration of the spirit, and had the apostle to instruct him. He said to Timothy, "Till I come, give attendance to *reading*." He adds, "*Meditate* upon these things." Now reading all that will be useful to a man in the ministry, and meditating on the things read, comprehends the whole circle of useful learning. A minister must be able to meet the enemies of the christian religion, armed with power, to repel them. In order to this, he must understand every thing that other men do, in regard to the grounds and sources of their objections to christianity, and then understand more than other men, in regard to the grounds of removing these

objections. There is a remarkable peculiarity in the office of a minister. The professions and works of other men, in regard to the full accomplishment of their designs, are expected to terminate with time. But the minister of Christ, when he has gone through all the walks and duties of life, in his directions and exhortations, must proceed to consider and display final causes, the counsels of eternity, the ends of moral government, the joys of heaven, the horrors of hell and the employments of both, the enlargement of capacities and the eternal triumphs of God's throne. He must display Christ in his relation to every work, to every doctrine, to every design and every event in time and eternity. And "who," with all his qualifications, "is sufficient for these things"?

4. From the view we have taken of the character and works of Christ in this discourse, we see a broad foundation laid to excite the humble joy of saints and the fearful apprehension of sinners. He is now managing all things with infinite wisdom and propriety. While he secures the general interest of his kingdom, he notices each part and each individual with strict constancy. He puts the "tears" of his saints into his "bottle," and records them in his "book." He is making every preparation for the day of judgment, as fast as time and the nature of things will permit. Not a moment is lost in moving forward the vast designs of his heart to this awful scene. He inspects the heart and actions of every soul, with as much persevering exactness, as if there was but one soul to which he directed his whole attention. He intends, in the consummation of things, to exalt the saint with almighty grace, and sink the sinner with almighty wrath. What a work will Christ, at last, perform! When we consider the progressive knowledge and expanding faculties of the soul, that every one, at some point in eternity, will contain within itself an amount of happiness equal to that of all the present heaven, or misery equal to that of all the present hell, and that an endless increase will be continued with a rapidity corresponding to the previous expansion of the mind, at each point of its progression; it is an inconceivably greater matter to dispose of one soul for eternity, than to dispose of all the kingdoms, thrones and empires of the world, from their first formation to the end of time; or greater than it is to dispose of all creatures in the universe for any period short of eternal duration. But Christ will dispose of all souls, and satisfy the claims of universal good in distributing to heaven and hell their just proportion. This truth ought to cause the saint to rejoice and the sinner to tremble. Let the earth awake to righteousness, and all the heavens adore!

Testament put into the hands of the man who is about to enter on the sacred office of the gospel ministry; what ought he to be able to do? Certainly, he ought to be able to obey the Saviour's command; "Search the scriptures." Then, he must be able to read these ancient and sacred languages. If he be not, he must continually take on the credit of the first translators in his ministrations to the church, "that which is her standard of faith and practice, her guide to eternal life."

But the carelessness of editors, and the thousand incidents of time, will make various readings in the translation. If the church contain no member, no officer who is able to examine the original, she will not be able to decide which among the various readings is the word of God. And even if the church have a correct translation, she would not know it certainly, nor be able to defend it against the attacks of her more learned enemies.

2. The gospel minister ought to be able to convince gainsayers; Tit. i. 9.

What opposition is he to meet from gainsayers? With all the show of learning, and plausibility of argument, they have said, and will say again.

"The books contained in that Hebrew volume are not the same, that Christ enjoined on his hearers to search. Nor does that Greek volume contain the writings, that were received as inspired in the apostolic age. Besides, if the books which that volume formerly contained are not lost, and apocryphal ones substituted in their place; yet they are so corrupted and mutilated, that there is no certainty, which parts are to be received as the word of God. Moreover, there is no evidence, that the matter they originally contained was given by inspiration, much less the matter they now contain. And the interpretation of them is so difficult, that it is impossible to determine their true meaning as is evident from the opposing and contradictory sentiments of the numerous christian sects in every period of the church."

Such is the gainsaying that must be refuted. This work Christ has entrusted to his ministers, and commanded them to execute it. Can it be done by the ignorant and untaught? Do they know where to begin, or what arguments to use? To perform this work the immense field of *Biblical criticism* must be explored. From this source alone a convincing answer may be given to every objection, and the ignorance of foolish men put to silence.

1. To the first part of the objection there is the most de-

monstrative answer. One fact may remove all doubt respecting the canon of the Old Testament. Both Jews and christians, between whom the most inveterate opposition has existed, agree in acknowledging the same books as canonical, which they would not do, had they undergone any change since the christian era. But they had not suffered any alteration before the introduction of christianity, as is evident from the fact, while Christ upbraids them for perverting the scriptures, he never insinuates, that they had been altered or corrupted. Beside, we have the evidence of Josephus, the christian fathers, and councils that the books were formerly the same which we now receive as canonical.

The testimony in favour of the New Testament is equally convincing. These books, at a very early period, were translated into the different languages of the countries over which the church had so widely extended. Some of these translations have been preserved to the present period. Ecclesiastical writers and general councils at an early period, made accurate lists of the books, which lists are still extant. The fathers have quoted from the copies of these scriptures so largely, that a great portion of the New Testament might be collected from their writings. And manuscript copies of these books are now extant from twelve to fifteen hundred years old. From all these sources, the most unexceptionable witnesses have been brought, all of whom concur in proving, *that the present canon of the New Testament is the true one.* These witnesses cannot have agreed to deceive the world. Some of them were unknown to the others for centuries. They have given their testimony at different times, in languages unknown to each other, in different and distant countries, and under circumstances which made collusion impossible. And if in some of the earliest lists a book, or an epistle be wanting, the difficulty is of easy solusion. The time of writing the books was at different and distant dates. They were committed to different churches, at a great remove from each other. Therefore, the earliest lists may have been made before time was given to collect and settle the whole. But the whole are included as early as could be expected when all the circumstances are considered. How naked must that minister be, who is unable to advance one thought to support the canon of scripture, or to distinguish between the genuine writings, and apocryphal, which are numerous.

2. The next strong hold of the enemy is, "these books have been interpolated in some places, and in other places parts have been left out"

Should the minister of the gospel be ignorant of the arguments by which this objection has been maintained? Should he be ignorant of the method of refuting them? If the gainsayer prevail, all is doubt and uncertainty; and must be doubt and uncertainty to the mind of the man, who is unable to repel the attack. Shall the church trust her treasures in such hands?

That the Old Testament had not been corrupted before Christ, may be fairly inferred from the fact, that neither Christ nor his apostles, give the least intimation of it; but recommend them as the word of God, which they would not have done, had they been mutilated. That they have not suffered from the hand of violence may be established by the most convincing arguments. The Jews exercise an unparallelled and even superstitious care, in guarding their sacred scriptures. They number every verse, and even word. They note every thing remarkable in the text, such as letters larger and smaller than ususal, in a suspended or inverted form; the middle verse of each book, verses that contain the whole alphabet, or that begin or end with a particular word. They are wont to say, was a letter altered, it would ruin the world. Their books, kept with such vigilance, agree with the copies in the hands of christians.

But the integrity of both the Old and New Testament is supported by other evidence. That no various readings should have crept into the sacred writings, seeing there are so many causes to produce them, would suppose a continued miracle. To ascertain the number and importance of these readings, learned men, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, at great expense and with unexampled diligence, have spent their lives in visiting every country into which the gospel had found its way, in search of copies of the scriptures. They have explored the cells of cloisters and monasteries; they have ransacked all the important libraries; and have obtained and collated a vast number of manuscripts. I might swell this article with a mere list of the names of men, who have distinguished themselves in this work. A few must suffice. Kennicott examined and collated *six hundred and forty-four* manuscripts and printed copies; De Rossi procured *six hundred and ten* manuscripts, *three hundred and ten* printed copies of different editions, besides *one hundred* and *thirty-four* sent to him from different parts, all which he collated. John Goth Ichhorn, it is said, has cultivated this department of literature more than any other man; he is perhaps still living. To these might be

added Munster, Vossius, Jeblonski, Houbigant, Michaelis, Mill, Wetsteen, with a host of others. By the labour of such men all the various readings have been ascertained, and not one in a hundred makes the slightest shade of difference in the meaning; and the whole taken together do not affect one important fact or doctrine. The sacred volume having been subjected to such an ordeal may henceforth bid defiance to all suspicion. And an effectual guard is furnished against the increase of different readings, even to a letter or point. These works will stand as witnesses like imperishable pillars of marble, that not a word or letter can pass by to go out or to enter within the sacred enclosure. Shall sentinels be set on Zion's walls totally ignorant of what is so closely connected with their duty? It would be like placing round an army in an enemy's country, sentries who were both blind and deaf.

But the minister ought to be able to give some account of the manuscripts and versions on which he has placed so much reliance. When were these versions made? In what country? By whom? Into what language? How? and where have they been preserved? How were they obtained for the purposes of collation? Shall he be unable to give any account of these witnesses for heaven, that his word has not been interpolated, that apocryphal books have not found a place in the *sacred canon*, and that not one inspired book has been lost? These versions are numerous. We can barely glance at them. The Samaritan and Chaldaic versions of the Old Testament, and the Septuagint were made before the christian era, Greek versions by Aquila, A. D. 128; by Symmachus, A. D. 180; by Theodotion, A. D. 200; the Æthiopic, 4th century; the Coptic, 5th century; the Syriac, 2d century, likely near the beginning; the Vulgate, by Jerome, A. D. 384.

To these versions are to be added the more modern ones; the Arabic, Persian, Sclavonic, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, and Armenian. A more minute account of these versions would be improper at this time.

3. "There is no evidence that the matter these books originally contained, were given by *inspiration* from God, much less the matter they now contain."

This objection leads into the wide field of dispute between christians and infidels. It comprehends the whole circle of evidence by which the scriptures are demonstrated to be the word of God. But when the question respecting the divine

origin of the scriptures, is settled, then the enquiry naturally rises, by what kind of inspiration were they given? Whether of elevation and superintendance only; or by a plenary suggestion of not only the thoughts, but of the very language employed to express the thoughts. It cannot need one remark to shew, that a minister should be extensively acquainted with this subject.

4th. "The interpretation of the scriptures are so difficult that it is impossible to determine their true meaning, as is evident from the opposing and contradictory sentiments of the numerous christian sects, in every period of the church."

"The meaning of the language of scripture is to be ascertained by attending to the grammatical and literal sense of the words, the force and significancy of the figures used, the idiom of the languages in which they were written; the circumstances of the case; in all which we ought to be guided by good sense and the analogy of faith."

We acknowledge, in proportion to the distance of time from which the sacred oracles were delivered, so does the difficulty of understanding many parts of them increase. This is the case with every book of great antiquity. Then the language of the bible, its figures and allusions in many places are to be understood only by understanding the political state of the nation to which it was originally given, and the political state of the surrounding nations, their manners, customs and religious rites; their geography, history, and chronology, all which have greatly changed or passed away, or lie concealed in remote antiquity. Hence the necessity of comments, geographical, historical and chronological notes. Ought not the theological student to be told where these helps may be had, and how to use them? The labours of the learned and pious have furnished the church with many excellent comments. The names of Gaon, Jarchi, Ezra, Maymon, Kimchi and Abrabanel, who were Jews, are mentioned with approbation by the learned.

Among the primitive fathers the labours of Chrysostom, Jerome, Syrus, Augustine, Gregory, Theophylact, Bede, and Maurus have been of service.

Among the Catholics, Quesnel, Calmet and Houbigant, are highly esteemed. Calmet's *Commentaire Literale* in nine folio volumes, is esteemed by some judges the best comment ever published on the sacred writings.

Among protestants, commentators are numerous, most of whose names I must omit. But I must not pass over the London Polyglott, 6 folio vols. Critici Sacri, 9 folio volumes;

Castell's Heptaglott Lexicon, 2 folio vols. Synopsis Criticorum, 5 folio vols. These works, printed in Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian, Greek and Latin, forming 22 vast folio volumes. One of these works alone, the *Critici Sacri*, in one of the editions, contains about *eighty* critics on the whole or parts of the scriptures, as standing works on *Biblical Criticism*. With helps like these the studious minister, a workman that need not be ashamed, may explain most of the difficult parts of the sacred volume.

3. He who is qualified, as it is desirable all ministers should be, must be able to bring forth from the sacred treasure, things new and old for the edification of the church, as well as be able to convince gainsayers. And that he may do both it is necessary.

1st. That he should have some acquaintance with *sacred chronology*. This science is intimately concerned in settling and illustrating many subjects with which we meet in investigating the sacred volume.

2d. The mind of man is incapable of examining, or even of forming, a judgment respecting the extensive materials that are necessarily connected with the foregoing enquiries, unless it is enlarged by a knowledge of grammar in general, of logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, mathematics, natural history, and polite literature. These expand the mind, give direction to its energies, and furnish it with just rules by which every subject is to be examined that is submitted to its inspection.

3d. The history of the church, in its rise and progress, its prosperity and its adversity; the doctrines that have been advanced in different periods with the arguments for and against; her government and discipline, are all of them important to her ministers. This history comprehends the events of many centuries, a knowledge of which cannot be obtained but by travelling through volume after volume.

4th. To this vast circle of knowledge, we must add a thorough and systematic acquaintance with the great scheme of grace taught in the bible, comprehending its doctrines, ethics, motives, and promises. These embrace a science the most sublime ever contemplated by men or angels. It is the science of God, of the principles of his moral government, of his schemes of wisdom, benevolence and mercy. Other sciences can boast of nothing greater than a knowledge of creation, its laws and movements. But this soars beyond the limits of creation up to the great eternal *First Cause* of

all things. In this science, the greatest created minds will find enough for all their powers, to employ them throughout endless duration. And shall the church send forth messengers for God uninstructed in this divine science? It is this alone that brings to view the proper objects of holy affection, that exhibits the unerring standard, by which we are to discriminate between holy and unholy affections, between natural and spiritual exercises. It is this sacred science that illumines the straight and narrow path that leads to heaven.

5th. It would be unpardonable, did we not add a saving knowledge of Christ and him crucified is indispensibly necessary to a gospel minister. Without this, all other attainments would but make him a more *splendid moral fool.* He must have felt the bitterness of sin, the pangs of the new birth, the sweet deliverance of almighty grace, the preciousness and fullness of the Saviour; that he may direct enquiring souls, comfort those who mourn, and strengthen the weak. No institution, however well regulated, no professors, however learned and pious, can impart this *saving knowledge of Christ.* But pious young men may be collected and placed in a situation where they may acquire the knowledge that may make them workmen, that need not be ashamed. Their zeal may be increased by adding fuel to the sacred flame. In a word, their piety and talents may be so improved and directed as to make them burning and shining lights in their generation.

Such are the outlines of those attainments in knowledge, which it is desirable every gospel minister should possess. If hundreds have preached the gospel with but a small portion of these qualifications, and hundreds are now preaching it, who have almost no claim to any kind of literature, whose labours God has, and now is, abundantly blessing in turning sinners from the error of their ways; yet this is no proof that these faithful and successful men would not have been still more useful, had their qualifications been of a higher order; and least of all does it prove, that no exertions should be made, to give candidates for the ministry the best qualifications possible.

CONCLUSION.

This day brings on an event, that has been the object of prayerful anticipation. The necessity and importance of a theological seminary for this western country, spontaneously rose in the hearts of many individuals about the same time:

When the subject was first mentioned, the coincidence of sentiment was a matter of agreeable surprise. The same cause had given birth to the same feelings. This circumstance was calculated to produce the conviction, that the time had come, that something ought to be attempted. But the discouragements were great. Where are the means to accomplish such an object? The gold and the silver are the Lord's. But where are the hearts and hands, that are ready to plan and execute so great an undertaking; and to prefer the Lord's claims to those who are stewards of his county? The Lord had prepared the proper persons to say, "we will go forward, although, like Abraham, we know not the way; yet he who guided the Patriarch will guide us in the right way," the attempt has been made, and not made in vain. The Lord has succeeded the plans and efforts of the synod and directors far beyond their most lively hopes. The people, whose patronage has been solicited, have given evidence of generous hearts and sound judgments by their prompt and liberal subscriptions. They have enabled you to prepare a neat and commodious building. You have also about 300 volumes for the commencement of a library. In the short space of three years from the adoption of the constitution you are prepared to put the seminary into formal operation. Hitherto the Lord has helped us, and to his name we raise our grateful Ebenezers.

The commission "go preach the gospel &c." was a most eventful era to man. The whole world was enveloped in thick darkness, Jews and Gentiles. But this was the dawn of heavenly light, destined to shine with brighter beams until the perfect day. By its rising glory the darkness, that had collected and condensed for ages around the intellectual powers of man, was to be dispersed, that celestial day might shed its influence on our race. The gospel presents a system of truth to the mind of man the most perfect and finished in its symmetry; the most sublime and grand in its design. We are astonished and delighted with the discoveries of philosophy. But the proudest heights to which she can possibly ascend is the summit of creation. Theology soars, with eagle eye, towards the eternal throne, looks on the perfections of Jehovah, and reveals his glories, his laws and counsels to man. The christian world has at length awoke to the importance of furnishing proper facilities for attaining the knowledge of this sacred science. Academies, colleges and universities have been founded and endowed at immense expence. Furnished with professors of languages, and hu-

man sciences of every name. Their edifices have been filled with libraries, and ornamented with philosophical apparatuses while their halls have re-echoed with learned lectures to enlighten and elevate the minds of the pupils by the knowledge of languages, history, philosophy, and eloquence. Law and medicine have claimed and obtained the same fostering care from the public. But how has sacred literature been treated for many ages, and in many parts of christendom? Let the church blush to answer. Has she not been left, like her divine author, to the accommodations of a manger, or committed to the hands of the ignorant and untaught to wrest and distort her noble features? Why thus? Is it not a science the most unparallelled in sublimity? Does it not extend to a greater variety of objects and relations, than the whole circle of human learning? It displays the being, attributes and designs of a God. It is the gospel that renovates man and prepares him for immortality and mansions in glory.

This institution was founded with the most liberal views towards other christian churches. Not indeed to select professors from the different denominations, or to place its government under some half dozen of sects, which would make it a babel of confusion; but to open the doors of the institution to young men of all christian denominations, and to secure to them the privilege of enjoying its advantages just to the extent they might choose. This, it was believed, was extending our charity and good will to others, as far as the nature of the case would admit. All may learn the sacred languages, all may study ecclesiastical history, sacred chronology, and biblical criticism; on these topics there is no division of sentiment. And if these were the only advantages that other denominations could in conscience receive from the seminary, are they so small and insignificant, that they are not worth offering, nor worth accepting? But what is there to hinder other denominations from becoming acquainted with the history of the sentiments of the various sects, that have existed since the commencement of the christian era, with the arguments used by themselves, and those used by their opposers? This branch of study is called *polemic divinity*, a history of the religious opinions of ancient and modern times. Then, as yet, there is nothing forbidding in the plan of the institution to the present christian denominations. Metaphysics, church government and didactic theology, remain. On these subjects there is difference of opinion; and yet much agreement. Where our views on some parts of these subjects differ from the views of one denomination, they

are at agreement with the views of another; so that there are few, if any subjects, on which some one denomination may not receive from the institution, the very thing which they desire; and not many subjects that are forbidding to any christian church.

From these liberal views, and a practice as liberal, it is hoped the institution will never depart. What can a generous public ask more at our hands?

Let the directors and managers of this sacred institution propose the *glory of God*, and the *advancement of that kingdom purchased* by *the blood* of *his only begotten Son*, as *their sole objects*, and they need not fear what man can do. Let these objects be pursued with meekness and persevering fidelity, leaving the event with the great head of the church, and we need not tremble for the issue.

THE

CHARGE,

BY

REV. JOHN McCAMPBELL, A. M.

CHARGE.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER;

I have been appointed to the duty of giving the charge in inaugurating you into the office of Professor in this sacred Institution, to which office you have been chosen by the Synod. It is made necessary by the constitution for you to answer the following questions:

1. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures.

2. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the presbyterian church, as prescribed in the form of the government and discipline of the presbyterian church in these United States.

Your having answered these questions in the affirmative, I proceed to observe;

The great scheme of gospel grace that God has adopted, will doubtlessly result in the most glorious display of his own name, perfections and character, and in the most blessed consequences to the great system of intelligent beings. The wisdom, benevolence, and power of God could not have been exerted in promoting objects more noble, grand and benevolent. The scheme that God has chosen is the result of his own wise, eternal council. Having had all possible plans before him, and comprehending most perfectly every possible scheme from beginning to end; nothing to bias in favour of one plan more than another; but the highest display of his own glory, and the greatest perfection of creature holiness and happiness; he therefore made choice of the scheme he is now effecting in its infinite variety of parts.

That part of the divine government, administered in relation to the vast family of man, excites the deepest interest in the bosom of the Adorable Trinity; and to this part of the divine administration, angelic hosts bend with adoring solicitude. Here are countless millions in rebellion against their sovereign and maker! Condemned by a most righteous and perfect law to eternal suffering; helpless and

hopeless; the sword of justice drawn to execute; held by the hand of omnipotent power, able, and ready to force on the work of eternal destruction. These countless millions must be executed, and placed far beyond bliss or hope, or be redeemed; but their redemption must be on terms safe to the rights of Godhead, and the best interests of an intelligent universe.

God's eternal council comprehended the scheme of man's redemption. That this scheme might have its proper bearing and effect on this revolted province, God calls to his aid many human agents to be co-workers with him. As none but God himself can comprehend his own great plans, so none are capable of conceiving a system of truth, or means to bring about his wise and grand designs, and of securing a redeemed church from the ruins of human apostacy. When he employs agents, it is to unfold and enforce his own system of truth, and to give the means, which he himself hath devised, their proper bearing. We cannot conceive of a more important agency exerted by man, than that exercised by imparting that instruction ordained by God, for the purpose of building up a redeemed church, amidst the ruins of sin. If we but take an account of family instruction in all its connections with time and eternity, on the present and unborn generations; how vast the amount? And if we rise to the sacred office of gospel minister, (to which office you have been already ordained) and contemplate the extensive field of its operation, and its immediate and more remote influence on present and future connections, we are lost in computation. But if we cast our eye along the effects, and widening influence, connected with the trust now about to be committed to you, we will see its weight and importance rising far beyond any thing we have yet named. Your instructions in this particular trust are not to be confined to one congregation; but you are to give views of God's character, of his system of truth, and of the great principles of his moral government, to young men who are to instruct and feed many of the congregations of God's people. Then, in proportion to the numbers who may draw from your instruction their views of truth, in the same proportion do we see the weighty importance of this trust extending. We must not stop here, but follow down the stream of time, and we will see its spreading influence and effects touching on all future generations, until the Redeemer shall have wound up the administrations of grace upon earth. Who can count the vast display of God's declarative glory?

Or number the fourth part of creature holiness and happiness which may result from such an influence?

God's character and glory are to be declared and manifested, only by his own system of truth, and the kingdom of his Son is to be promoted and built up, only by understanding and unfolding that system in its connection. On the other hand, human invented systems tend only to darken counsel, and spread a cloud over the divine character and glory. Error and falsehood, the inventions of men, spread a thicker darkness over minds already benighted, and become a fruitful source of ruin and slaughter to immortal souls.

When error and human schemes once get currency, who can tell where their destructive effects will stop? Or when their baneful progress will be arrested? Or who can count the ruin they may accomplish?

Now, dear brother, the work before you is to understand, unfold, and communicate God's grand system of truth, in its connection. Error, in its most refined dress, has nothing in promoting God's great and gracious plans. You are to separate the wheat from the chaff; the gold from the dross, and the clean from the unclean.

We present before you, as motives to diligence and fidelity, the grand and all important cause in which God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are engaged, and the immortal interest of never, never, never dying souls! You are invited to give your aid as a worker with God, in using his truth, so as to promote his glory to the best advantage, and so as to bring many, very many of the ruined and lost family of man, to everlasting rest. We remind you, that a proper use of truth may be the occasion of life, boundless, eternal life, to millions. But, we also remind you, that an improper use of it may be the cause of death! horrible, eternal death! to thousands, to millions! And in the view of that glorious, dreadful day, which shall try every man's work of what sort it is, and will fix, eternally fix, the state of all men, and before God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we charge you to be faithful.

And now, dear brother, "We commend you to God, and the word of his grace; for who is sufficient for these things."